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Bikeshare Could Be a New Bethesda Commuting Option

BUP is pushing for installation of Bikeshare stations in Bethesda. By [Scott Maucione](#)

A new commuting option could be coming to Bethesda in the near future. The [Bethesda Urban Partnership](#) has been pushing for a [Capital Bikeshare program](#) like those in Washington, D.C., and Arlington, Va. If all goes well, Bethesda could see the installation of the first Bikeshare station by spring.



Already-congested Bethesda is gearing up to face a host of transportation challenges this fall, including traffic issues near the soon-to-be [Walter Reed National Military Medical Center](#) and the [closure](#) of a 270-space surface parking lot near Woodmont Avenue and Bethesda Avenue. Local leaders are hoping to encourage commuters out of their cars, and Bikeshare could soon be another alternative commuting option.

For a yearly fee of \$75, Capital Bikeshare members have access to community bikes located at several bike racks throughout an area. The bikes can be picked up and dropped off at any Bikeshare station. Riders also have options for monthly, 24-hour and five-day memberships. Riding time over 30 minutes costs extra money.



"We already have a network that is well-established that works well," said David Dabney, executive director of Bethesda Urban Partnership, referring to the various trails that connect Bethesda, the District, Silver Spring, Friendship Heights, and other areas.

BUP is hoping to use state funds to install and maintain the first few stations in Bethesda. State Sen. Brian E. Frosh (D – Dist. 16) told Patch he will push for state funding through a transportation grant or through a bond bill.

"Bikeshare would work very well for Bethesda," Frosh said.

The initial cost of the station installation, equipment and first-year operation ranges from \$49,458 for six bikes with 11 docks to \$95,277 for 14 bikes with 27 docks. Yearly operation costs for a six-bike station are \$11,718 for the second year, \$12,304 for the third and \$12,919 for the fourth.

Dabney is hoping that corporate sponsors will fund more Bikeshare stations following the installation of the first several docks. Many Bethesda companies have already begun to support alternative forms of commuting, including by installing showers for bike commuters, Dabney said. Alternative commuting options have grown more popular in the last ten years, and the Bikeshare program would offer another way to encourage commuters out of their cars and off of Bethesda's busy streets, Dabney said.

However, further infrastructure like bike lanes may be needed in order to ensure biker safety, Dabney said.

"I even get nervous on the roads and I'm experienced," Dabney said.

Non bike-riders can learn more about alternative transportation options like Metro, the [Bethesda Circulator](#), and carpooling at the [Bethesda Transportation Solutions](#) website.